Table of Contents

1. 1.1: Not Who You Think I Am
2. 1.2: Not Who You Think I Am
3. 1.3: Not Who You Think I Am
4. 2.1: Dog Can't Save You Now
5. 2.2: Dog Can't Save You Now
6. 2.3: Dog Can't Save You Now
7. 3.1: Something Something Personal Privacy
8. 3.2: Something Something Personal Privacy
9. 3.3: Something Something Personal Privacy
10. 4.1: Domestic Name For A Wild Animal
11. 4.2: Domestic Name For A Wild Animal
12. 4.3: Domestic Name For A Wild Animal
13. 5.1: Show Me Your Guts
14. 5.2: Show Me Your Guts
15. 5.3: Show Me Your Guts
16. 6.1: Are You Not Loved?
17. 6.2: Are You Not Loved?
18. 6.3: Are You Not Loved?
19. 7.1: Spittle And Bone
20. 7.2: Spittle And Bone
21. 7.3: Spittle And Bone
22. 8.1: A Throne Weeps Not For Its Princess
23. 8.2: A Throne Weeps Not For Its Princess
24. 8.3: A Throne Weeps Not For Its Princess
25. 9.1: Wanderlegs
26. 9.2: Wanderlegs
27. 9.3: Wanderlegs
28. 10.1: The Rattling Of Something Empty
29. 10.2: The Rattling Of Something Empty
30. 10.3: The Rattling Of Something Empty
31. 11.1: We Made A Blood Pact
32. 11.2: We Made A Blood Pact
33. 11.3: We Made A Blood Pact
34. 12.1: Kenny's Friend's House, 2016

35. 12.2: Kenny's Friend's House, 2016
36. 12.3: Kenny's Friend's House, 2016
37. 13.1: Forgive This
38. 13.2: Forgive This
39. 13.3: Forgive This
40. 14.1: Hunter Skins The Hare
41. 14.2: Hunter Skins The Hare
42. 14.3: Hunter Skins The Hare
43. 15.1: The Aftermath Of Smelling Like Dirt
44. 15.2: The Aftermath Of Smelling Like Dirt
45. 15.3: The Aftermath Of Smelling Like Dirt
46. 16.1: "You Wake Up, Open The Door And Escape To The Sea"
47. 16.2: "You Wake Up, Open The Door And Escape To The Sea"
48. 16.3: "You Wake Up, Open The Door And Escape To The Sea"
49. 17.1: Haunting At The Slumber Inn
50. 17.2: Haunting At The Slumber Inn
51. 17.3: Haunting At The Slumber Inn
52. 18.1: Nightmare Mother
53. 18.2: Nightmare Mother
54. 18.3: Nightmare Mother
55. 19.1: Omen Of Sunrise
56. 19.2: Omen Of Sunrise
57. 19.3: Omen Of Sunrise
58. 20.1: Gives Me Direction To The Place I Belong
59. 20.2: Gives Me Direction To The Place I Belong
60. 20.3: Gives Me Direction To The Place I Belong
61. 21.1: Helps Me Escape To The Place I Belong
62. 21.2: Helps Me Escape To The Place I Belong
63. 21.3: Helps Me Escape To The Place I Belong
64. 22.0: You Will Find It (Epilogue)

1.1: Not Who You Think I Am

Old grey fur hugged the feet, the only pieces still intact of the rabbit.

Timmory Cross stared. The camera hung off her neck as she crouched to poke the carcass with a stick. Its long padded feet were kicked together, spine twisting through leaf litter and clotted with dry red blood. Most of its bones were missing. It didn't look much like itself, not even the skull.

She fixed the camera to her eye. The eye socket stared back. Timmory snapped a few photos of her subject, unsure of what happened to the creature to have it sprawled so elegantly in repose. It couldn't have been a kill. She nudged it with her toe, disturbing channels of ants sipping the sugars of its decay. She exposed the scavengers that picked it apart and took photos of them too. Fragments of lives fascinated Timmory. That was usually why she came to Gaspereau Mountain.

Her careful feet stepped over the rabbit. Timmory let the camera rest and steadied her hand on the aspen overlooking the dip where the carcass was left, then stepped up and into the brush. On warm mornings like this, the forest unraveled; insects and birds made the trees come alive in symphony. Sun danced and leaves shivered as omens of the breeze. Dragonflies hovered like tiny drones past her head, mosquitoes tickled her arms and left welts even without sticking her. Timmory hummed a song stuck in her head that she remembered from yesterday. Nearly tripping over a deep cleft, Timmory slapped the back of her neck and inspected the paw prints in the ground, mud still pliable from the rain a few days ago. *Maybe it* was *a kill.* Timmory took a photo and stepped after the tracks—

Until a spot of curious shade caught her eye a meter away. She loomed over the patch in the grass where three ink blots charred the dirt black, burnt growth retaining its shape as carbon. Timmory touched it with the tip of her shoe, but while it looked to be wet, it

only smeared like ash. She wondered what had touched the Earth there.

"Tim, what are you doing?"

She took a photo of the three spots, then returned to the wolf tracks. "Hey, bring Brutus over here! You wanna see something crazy?"

A head of blonde hair bobbed toward her, her friend climbing through brush off the edge of the trail near their campsite. Julia brought the German shepherd tight on his leash into the trees with her. Timmory knelt, jostling Brutus by the scruff when he bounded up to her. She kept him in place until Julia, puffing and swiping debris off her thighs, stood in front of Timmory.

"Look," said Timmory, borrowing Brutus' paw to compare it to the tracks.

"They're so big! Are those wolves?" Julia leaned down.

"I think so. They look too big to be coyotes, and I don't think coyotes come this deep into the woods," Timmory pointed out, only guessing. She let Brutus go and gave him a pat. "Thanks bud."

The dog licked her chin and Timmory grimaced and stood, wiping it away. When Brutus zeroed in on the rabbit carcass, she grabbed the red bandana around his neck and guided him back to Julia. She wasn't about to let him eat leftovers and get sick.

"You don't think they were around last night, do you?" asked Julia, crackling through the branches. "I heard about those attacks."

"Not near our campsite. Brutus would've noticed," said Timmory.

"That's a relief. I'd hate to be eaten by wolves the week before school."

Timmory laughed. "That would be ironic."

Julia snorted. "Are you still taking pictures of weird shit or can we move on?"

"Onward to the next weird shit," declared Timmory.

Soon it would be too cold to camp overnight. All the best discoveries were made in the dawn; she wanted to explore as much as she could before she was limited to camping on the three or five weekends she had left.

It wasn't Timmory's idea to take classes so soon after graduating high school. At the start of her senior year, Timmory decided she would take time off to explore what she wanted to be, first; but the pressure from her parents and Julia convinced Timmory to apply to Acadia University, the heart of their student-run town of Wolfville, Nova Scotia. Even if she got accepted, Timmory was leery about attending. Then she *was* accepted, because her marks were just good enough, and registration rolled around and Julia urged her to look at classes with her. And okay, maybe taking classes with Julia sounded fun; they wouldn't have Julia's friends taking Julia's attention all the time, and it would just be Timmory and her childhood friend again. Timmory always following, loyal. Timmory with nobody else she'd rather be friends with than Julia. It wasn't so much Julia that Timmory was possessive of as it was being part of a duality. Being part of something was nice. The problem that ensued was the freedom she sacrificed. Timmory didn't want to be taking university classes—she didn't even know what she wanted in her life. She craved to wander, she craved this forest, but if it meant being alone...? She would defy her wandering nature for Julia.

Timmory told herself this when they said goodbye to the forest early that afternoon.

Timmory's car was parked at the end of the camping trail: a white '98 Malibu, its paint chipped and metal rusted, betraying the long use of it by her father before it was handed down to her. As they tossed their gear in the backseat with Brutus, Timmory lingered, drinking one last gulp of fresh forest air. She climbed into the driver's seat and they pulled out of the parking lot, weaving through the forest surrounding Gaspereau Mountain until it opened up to the highway. Julia rolled the window down and cranked the radio, singing along to *Boy Meets Girl*. Timmory caught a glimpse of her with her blonde hair billowing, a picturesque smile against her skin, while Brutus behind her panted in the sunshine. Timmory rolled her

window down and rested her arm on the edge.

The car rumbled to a halt at a highway intersection, and the music faded and a voice babbled on with an advertisement for *Twins' Home & Garden* just outside of town. Timmory flipped through stations searching for another song.

"Can I ask you something?" asked Julia.

Timmory brushed stray hairs from her ponytail behind her ear. "Yeah?"

"What do you think about when we're out there?"

The light turned green. Timmory accelerated. "What?"

"Walking through the woods, looking for bones. What do you think about?"

"What kinda question is that, Jules?"

Julia said nothing, so Timmory could tell it was more than curiosity.

"I was daydreaming," she said.

"About what?"

"I don't share what I daydream about. You'll think it's weird."

Julia laughed. "I know what you were thinking about."

Timmory stared at the road, though she wanted badly to give Julia a look. It was already creeping on her face. "What?"

"You're thinking about having to study for tests and do homework and take notes," said Julia.

"Ah, you got me."

"And how much you'll hate it."

"I don't do notes." Timmory shrugged.

"You better not fuck off halfway through the semester," warned Julia, smiling.

"Yeah. Over your dead body," scoffed Timmory. "The only reason I'm sticking around is for you." She grinned back.

"Good. I know it's a little scary," said Julia. "It's scary for me too. But we'll be starting this new thing together."

This was why Timmory was willing to set her desires aside. They may roar in the back of her head, but as fickle as Timmory was, she was awfully weak to the ones she loved and who loved her back. "Just don't..." she started, then faded.

"Don't what?"

Timmory's expression twinged a little. "Don't turn into someone else on me, okay?"

It almost happened in high school. She almost lost Julia; had Timmory not used the advantage of childhood history, she wasn't sure she would have stayed such a pivotal part of Julia's friend circle. The other popular girls certainly never liked Timmory as much as they liked Julia.

Julia reached for Timmory's hand. "I won't. You stay, and I'll keep our friendship above everything else." Because Julia *knew* that Timmory was afraid of it happening again. "I promise."

Timmory squeezed her hand back, reassured by her friend's love. "I promise too."

They sped past the bright blue sign of the water behind Acadia University's clocktower, greeting *Welcome to Wolfville* in the sunlight, then she watched the back of the sign shrink to a far-off place in her rearview mirror. Were that promise ever broken, it was this moment she would look back to; the moment that love condemned her to her Fate.

That Sunday evening, dreams throttled her relentlessly. Timmory always dreamt of running. It came about with the pressure of feeling contained; when she got into relationships, when she had

important dates coming up, when she was stuck at home for too long going stir crazy. It was always different what she was running from and she never remembered the face; what she remembered was the feeling. How she could put all of herself into moving and somehow, still her limbs would be limp. She could never run fast enough. It didn't take deciphering the prophecies of her dreams to know what they meant. It was more psychological than anything.

She woke at 4 AM to stillness, her parents asleep in the room down the hall. Timmory stretched and closed her eyes, but sleep felt impossible. She sat up and perused the souvenirs she brought back from the hike that weekend: the photos on her camera, her discoveries that she couldn't dislodge, only return to. The rabbit. The black drops. Some interesting fungi still clinging to trees into the end of summer. The black drops.

Surely just charcoal from a campfire. She zoomed in, but there was nothing interesting hidden in the pixels. Or maybe she just wasn't looking hard enough...

Timmory squinted, the bright light on the viewfinder blinding her in the darkness.

When browsing her photos failed to lull her back asleep, Timmory swung out of bed and prowled to the kitchen. She opened the fridge and stared into the light, again, searching for something to sate her night-time hungers. A loaf of bread and lunchmeat would suffice. Timmory collected her ingredients and fashioned a meal in the darkness.

She was about to take a bite when a shuffling down the hall gave her pause. Timmory watched, teeth poised over her meal, before a tall figure materialized rubbing his face.

"Tim? What are you doing up?"

She sunk her teeth in and chewed. "Midnight snack," she said, mouth full.

Her father stepped past with his empty glass to fill it in the sink. "It's a little late for that," said Wallace. "I heard you scavenging in

the dark and thought somebody broke in."

Timmory leaned against the counter, unfazed. "I would've noticed first." She watched him drink his water, the glass glinting reflections from streetlights outside, while she ate the rest of her sandwich.

The glass was refilled a second time. "You aren't nervous about Wednesday, are you?"

"Am I that unreliable?" Timmory scowled, wiping crumbs off her mouth with the back of her arm. "You and Julia are both breathing down my neck. What's next, is Mom gonna come give me The Look?"

"If you sass me loud enough, she might."

Her Hispanic mother heard everything. Her white father, not so much. Except tonight it seemed.

"I'm not nervous about Wednesday. I'm not nervous about anything. I just couldn't sleep," dismissed Timmory, walking ahead of her father so she could be the one leaving the conversation.

He drifted behind her, only to turn the opposite direction in the hallway. "Well, don't stay up too late or you'll fudge your sleep schedule."

"I'm nocturnal. I got it from you," Timmory said in front of her door.

Wallace chuckled. "I'm only when I need to be."

"This?" Timmory pointed at all of herself. "This is your fault."

Her father guffawed. "Go to sleep, Tim."

She watched him disappear through the door, certain that no part of his instructions would be what coaxed her to sleep.

1.2: Not Who You Think I Am

Orientation was on Tuesday, but Timmory had no interest in being somewhere she didn't need to be and ditched at lunch. Classes didn't *really* start until Wednesday, so it was on Wednesday morning that Timmory drove Julia to campus with all the anxiety in her heart she said she didn't have. They took too long to find a parking spot. Despite its location in the heart of a small town where most students lived in dorms or within walking distance, parking at Acadia University turned out to be surprisingly hard to come by. They found a space in a far corner, and as the time crept a few minutes past 8:30, the pair scampered across campus to find their first building. It was less easy to find the room, and even less so finding a place to sit among the packed rows of seats. They had to sit a couple rows apart with Timmory opting for the chair further back, eying the boy that Julia sat next to with hot jealousy. While their professor outlined the syllabus and proceeded into the first lesson, Timmory struggled to pay attention, hastily jotting notes before her eyes drifted elsewhere, to the windows or multitudes of heads that sat before her, to Julia and the boy—her new, if temporary rival. When the class ended, she was first on her feet and shimmying to freedom, waiting for Julia at the end of her row.

They walked together outside, but Julia broke off in another direction. "My next class is in the Beveridge," she said, bracing for Timmory's melodrama.

Timmory stared ruefully in the direction of the building. "Lunch?"

Julia nodded.

"I'll meet you here." Timmory watched Julia flit away, her friend tossing one last confident smile. What did it take to be as optimistic as Julia or her parents? Whatever it was, clearly it was something Timmory lacked. She withdrew a crumpled map of the campus from her backpack, a souvenir from orientation the day before. Pinpointing her next class, Timmory cut through the mingling streams to another building.

Her second class, *Geology of Earth*, was in a building adorned with shiny rocks and old fossil replicates. Her quirky professor encouraged students to experience the texture of piles of dirt she lifted up in her hands. The class ended late and they were released into a surging crowd of students already on the way to their next class, and Timmory panicked, realizing she hadn't checked the location of her third class. She stopped by a second-floor window and consulted her map, only to find she had to travel all the way across campus again. Maybe she should have planned her schedule better. *Ugh! I wish I knew where I was going!* Frustrated, Timmory oriented herself with the surroundings of the building outside, then was distracted by migrating herds of humans below.

Among them, a man in a blond bun walked backwards, speaking with his hands to a woman and two children. Timmory watched him point. At one building, at another building. At *her* building, at *her* in the window, although he likely didn't know it; she felt exposed when the two children looked her way, and she caught the eyes of the little girl.

Then a reflection moved in the window. Timmory's attention shifted behind her, crystal clear out of the glass, the face of another student. Watching the family too. Or watching her?

When she turned the face was gone, but Timmory remembered distinctly red hair and saw him up ahead. She paid absolutely no attention to him as he walked the same path to her next class. She purposefully lost him in the rush between buildings, then spent too many minutes finding the room. By the time she arrived at her third class, *Introductory Cultural Anthropology*, it was already in session. Timmory peeked in and spied a mass of students staring at the professor as he reviewed office hours. She didn't want to intrude. Surely, she could just listen to him talk out here, right? But then she'd need a syllabus. What if he popped some random first day quiz? She couldn't just bust in like she was spying on them from outside. But if she walked in now, everyone would stare at her. Timmory bit her lip. It was by some miracle of God that he implored the students to turn to their neighbor and introduce themselves. That was a big part of anthropology: getting to know people, he said. Timmory slipped in, scanning for an open seat. An

opportunity at the end of a row. Beside her, her neighbor's conversation was dying down. As she tucked her backpack between her feet and settled in, he turned to her with a smile.

"Hey—"

"I'm Timmory," she said, looking at him, pulling the notebook out of her backpack, looking at him a second time. Red hair.

He blinked and half-smiled. "I'm Milo. Do I know you from somewhere?"

"I didn't follow you," she said.

"Kinda think you did," said Milo, still smiling.

Timmory frowned at her neighbor, with his shaggy head of strawberry hair and mess of freckles on his cheeks. His eyes were charming and warm honey brown, and he looked tall with his long legs folded awkwardly in front of him. And he was a little attractive. She brushed it off. "If I followed you, I wouldn't be late," she countered.

"You must be a slow walker. I'll wait up for you Friday."

"Sorry, won't be in the area. Was just taking a detour."

"Didn't I see you walking out of that rock class...?" Milo's smiled still. Or maybe it was just that Timmory kept noticing it.

Timmory squinted. "I think you followed me."

"I didn't follow you," he said.

The professor started back up and Timmory sighed with relief. She eyed Milo, who eyed her back with a good-natured smirk from his smile. She continued to absolutely not pay any attention to him during class, completely not aware of each of his movements shifting in his chair, totally not seeing his elbow on the divider between their seats. When the professor dismissed them, Timmory rose and tried to make a fast exit and *only* stopped because Milo was the one who spoke after her.

"Hey, Tim? Timmory, right?" he asked, testing out her unusual name.

She looked at him.

"Mind if I sit with you next class?" He looked down at her, leaving the room beside her.

The question was unwelcome. "Like next Anthropology class?"

"Yeah. Well, unless we're walking to the same class again right now."

"I don't have a class. I'm going for lunch," she said, evading him.

"No way. Down in the student center?" he gawked.

"Um... probably."

Milo snapped his fingers. "You must have copied my schedule."

"Pfft!" Did he think he was smooth? "You trying to make friends or something?"

That made him laugh, which made her uncomfortably fuzzy. Talking to attractive people stressed her out. "See, I recently moved here from Halifax for school. I don't really know anyone," Milo admitted. "We walk the same way to class. Maybe we can hang out?"

Timmory strained to believe her ears. Who did this boy think he was, playing cat-and-mouse with her in the hallways, looking cute, talking her up? Had he walked out of a piece of college romance fiction? Was he pulling some trick on her? She narrowed her eyes but Milo only looked shockingly earnest, his smile disarming. Something had to be up.

"What?" he knitted his eyebrows. "Sorry. Should I back off?"

She had no *good* reason to actually tell him to. Timmory sighed. "I'm going to lunch with my friend Julia. You can join us if you like."

Milo looked relieved. He must have been really desperate for a friend. Timmory certainly wouldn't have gone to the same lengths to make one. "You sure? I'm just trying to get to know people."

"Yeah, it's cool." Julia could entertain him at least. Timmory would sit by and judge him. "Why'd you come to Acadia if you're from Halifax, anyway?"

He explained how even after working part-time for two years, he was struggling to afford tuition at Dalhousie and his father was going to start charging him rent if he lessened his course load. He said his mother, who lived in Wolfville, recommended Acadia. When he realized the cost of classes was leagues cheaper, he transferred his credits and moved in with her; they hadn't spent much time together since his parents divorced a few years ago, when they were all still living in Halifax, so it was nice to be with her again. Timmory caught his eye and smiled insincerely at his sweetness.

"So you'll go back to Halifax once you're done?" she asked.

Milo stuck his hands in his pockets. "Who knows."

Julia was already waiting on the lawn, phone in one hand while the other tucked blonde coils behind her ear. Her pink backpack sat evenly between her shoulders, her shirt perfectly smoothed and white runners yet muddied, as if she'd just manifested from a plane of heavenly flawlessness. Conversely, Timmory felt like a frazzled mess, her face a little red from Milo, her armpits damp, her backpack slung off one shoulder with its zipper half-open. Spotting Julia, she picked up her pace. "Jules!" The blonde looked up quizzically, but needn't ask before Timmory introduced the stranger at her side. "This is Milo. He moved here from Halifax and he has no friends, so I invited him to lunch."

Milo smiled, like usual.

Julia laughed like she was flirting. "Sure. I'm Julia."

They had barely enough time to order sandwiches from one of the booths in the student center. Timmory shoved the second half of

her sandwich down her gullet with the grace of a pelican and waved her departure to Milo, dragging Julia off to their afternoon obligations. Milo cheerily waved back. After class, in the car as Timmory navigated back to Julia's house, Julia reflected on how nice it was that Timmory made another friend. She said it in a way that was familiarly condescending—but Timmory reminded her, *I'm doing this for you*. Besides, she wasn't expecting Milo to stick around long. University wasn't anything like high school. There were more friends to be made in his other classes, and she wasn't about to build her hopes up when they were sure to be torn down the moment she saw him talking to someone else, or Julia flirting with him again—but she was just a jealous person. She liked her solitude better than being disappointed by people. She definitely had a people problem.

Later that night, when she opened her Anthropology text and picked over the first few pages, Timmory remembered that she only ever gave up what she wanted to *not* be alone. It was animal nature to crave one's own kind. It was the foundations of humanity to forfeit solitude for community. It was Timmory's inherent social engine driving her to survival—so she found herself at war with her hungers and her needs, her heart and her feet. Timmory's fears were rekindled: feeling jealous, being sidelined, *coming out alone anyway*.

She didn't want to let Milo in. She remembered only his red hair from the dream that night: she a rabbit, and he a reaching hand.

1.3: Not Who You Think I Am

Under stars, they moved like they were one of the trees, a geometric shadow cleaved by branches and ribbons of moonlight. They stepped down the trail with no light to guide them, sifting through blue-green shapes in thermal imaging goggles. Two feet in black boots, black jacket, black hood and a rifle strapped to their back; as dark as the night itself. But in spite of the camouflage, they didn't belong here in these trees, in these shadows. They were interloper, fixed to a path made by something else.

The hunter scanned the trees down the trail. No warmth appeared in their vision except for shivering spots of small, underground mammals sheltering in the litter. The forest barely even stirred. They were alone out here, like they always were until the moment they meant not to be; but that moment wouldn't be tonight. They were just looking.

An aperture in the brush marked where they had to go. Stepping with care, they avoided snapping twigs or moving too much of the leaves, gloved hands steady on the aspens. The trill of the forest grew louder the deeper they went, frogs hopping out from underfoot and landing in a rustle, sleeping lungs taking their first waking breaths. The breeze picked up as the forest inhaled them. Like something was just made aware of them. They scanned the ground for signatures of passage, the slightest dip of temperature in some winding pattern; they knew the wolves had been here. They saw it on the trail cam a few days ago. They saw *Her*, too.

It wasn't tracks they found, but a set of warm colour drops settled among grass. They glimpsed three yellow specks in the ground and curiously went closer, stooping through a dip in the ground. Something crunched beneath the boot. Below, it was a tattered spinal column fastened together by blackened fascia, barely visible out of the night. They touched the bones and the withered feet, dug the skull out of its own remains, but didn't extract it with its spine

still attached. They just looked at it down in their hand. *This must be what they were hunting*. The hunter set down the prey of its prey and stepped out of the dip. They sought the spots again and found them, five spots in the grass.

Five?

Curious tilt of the head. They stepped.

Six spots out of the green thermal view, the newest burning white hot then rapidly cooling to red, orange, dull yellow. A seventh spot, and this time they saw the shape of it before it hit the ground, dripping. But nothing in their vision showed where it came from. Eighth spot, coming toward them.

Then the flicker of a body, suddenly so white in the goggles it blinded them. Not natural. Too close for comfort. Each time the image shuddered, the air shrieked and stilled again, breeding fear that outweighed their purpose here. They stumbled back, collapsing into the dip as crisp heat ate above them. The monstrous wolf took shape with snarling teeth. Or wolf-like monster? It terrified them because they didn't know. Panicked, they scrambled out of the dip and crashed through the forest, and the monster crashed after them.

Hours later, under the pale hum of a single bathroom bulb, he scrubbed his hands. Gushing water splashed off the inside of the sink, clots of red and sweet pink spinning into the drain. He leaned his elbows on the edge and picked the blood out from under his fingernails. He rubbed them, each time expecting to see the nail slide off his nailbed in a slime of blood and metamorphic ichor. *It terrified him.* Hand on his hip where he'd been bitten, he gave himself another dose of *lupokitene* just in case. Blood was everywhere. His blood. Its blood, steaming hot... *black*.

It came out of a nightmare. Something was wrong with the wolves.

His fingers shook over the gouge. He tossed the needle in the garbage and panted. Nothing was changing. Nothing would change... *as long as She doesn't know*.

2.1: Dog Can't Save You Now

The next time Timmory saw Milo was two days later—Friday morning, the moment she stepped out of her Geology class. He waved her down, freckles and hair and tallness making him difficult to miss. "How are you?" he asked.

Timmory cleaved her attention between talking to him and dodging other students. "Oh, fine. I could go for a nap."

He laughed above her head, one hand tucked in the front pocket of his pullover. "Don't fall asleep on me. You're the one taking notes for us."

"Since when?" She sneered at him.

"You don't remember? I distinctly recall you saying, 'Sure Milo, I'll take the notes if you read the text'."

"That can't be right, because I read the text *and* took notes."

"You read the text?" Milo adjusted his backpack. "Good, because I didn't."

Timmory scoffed. "If you can't keep up your end of the deal then you aren't getting my notes."

"So we do have a deal?"

His rapid-fire mind games were both thrilling and vexing. Timmory looked bemused at him. "I don't know if I like this deal." She wasn't about to depend on *Smilo* for important class work. He was stupid if he thought he could depend on her taking notes for him. "How about you write your notes and I write mine, then we compare them later."

He smiled, which quickly threw her reservations into disarray. "Sure."

Stupid Smilo. "Anyway. How's your little friend quest going?"

He shrugged. "Talked to a few people on Wednesday. I don't have classes Tuesdays or Thursdays."

"Aren't you taking a full course load?"

"Yeah, but none of them are on Tuesdays or Thursdays." Hearing about his freedom made her bitterly jealous. "Hey, did you hear about what's going on at the Diederich Suites next weekend?" His voice quirked enthusiastically.

Scratching her chin, Timmory mulled on it. "Oh yeah, we heard about it on the radio this morning. The von Diederich family's coming in for the grand opening, aren't they?"

"It's supposed to be a huge thing." Milo's eyes lit up as he showed her an article about the event on his phone.

Timmory leaned in and skimmed. She already knew about the planned office spaces; the building with its immaculate white metal and glass architecture stood out like a sore thumb along the colourful older buildings down Main Street. The style was signature to Hildebrandt von Diederich, a local celebrity who, alongside Acadia University, was one of the few reasons anybody might have even heard of their little town. He wasn't even a native of it. The German architect moved to the hometown of his psychologist wife, and then left after she died. Some people boasted Wolfville as 'the hometown of the von Diederich family' regardless of the fact that they only lived there a few years. The article detailed the upcoming event and how the family was supposed to make an appearance for the grand opening of the building next Saturday evening. Later, they were going to host a fancy reception that only those who donated to or participated in the construction of—the designing and planning part, of course, not the physical labor—were invited to. Timmory didn't find it that interesting; it wasn't like she was going. "Is the whole family gonna be there?" she asked.

"Yeah. Hildebrandt, Gerhard, Felix, and Erika," Milo scrolled down the article, pouring over photos of the building pre—and post—construction, as well as of the family smiling and waving.

"Are you going to go?"

Milo looked shocked. "There's no way I'd get into that party. Maybe I'll go for the grand opening and watch. I'd like to see Erika in person, I heard she's actually like really small."

"I hear she's possessed by a demon," said Timmory. "There's this rumor that any time you see Erika von Diederich when she's not doing some public appearance, something terrible happens. Like she's cursed. You know, like people say they go home with her but then wake up in the middle of the woods, or how someone died—you heard about that, right? Someone *really* died at a party she was at."

Laughing, Milo put his phone away. They were nearly at the classroom. "I mean if you're constantly in the limelight like she is, you'd probably do crazy shit to get a little privacy too. Or maybe all that stuff's just an accident."

"Maybe. Or she traded her soul to the devil for everlasting beauty," Timmory rolled her eyes. "Jules really wants to go to that too."

"We should go together."

Timmory kicked herself for divulging their plans. She was convinced that Milo would have lost interest in her, but now she wondered if he didn't even care about her. Maybe he just wanted to get in Julia's pants. "I'll ask. She might have plans."

"I don't know what else you could be doing on a Saturday night that's more exciting than that."

She shrugged, but by then they turned into the classroom and were looking for seats. "I'll see," Timmory repeated and turned her attention to the professor.

At lunch, Milo asked to join them again. Timmory made an excuse about how she and Julia were heading back to Julia's place for a quick ten-minute lunch because someone forgot something that they needed in the afternoon, and rejoined Julia at their customary meeting place.

"No Milo today?" she asked, craning her neck to look for the tall boy.

"Nah. Busy," Timmory answered and brushed past Julia, guiding her in the direction of the parking lot. "You wanna get some burgers?"

"There's no burger joint on campus."

"Let's go for a drive," she said.

A woman on the radio started talking about the Diederich Suites; Timmory turned the volume down and snuck a glance at Julia. "You still good for our hike tomorrow?"

"Yes Ma'am," she beamed, then gasped and turned the radio back up. "They're talking about next weekend," Julia interjected.

"Oh yeah, that," yawned Timmory.

"I was thinking we'd meet some friends at the Boatswain later. Maybe one of the boys will be there," she suggested with a flirty wink.

Sure, if Julia wanted to ditch Timmory to try to get laid by some socialite jerkhole, it sounded great. Timmory smiled thinly and bounced her hands on the steering wheel. Maybe she *should* invite Milo along. Maybe she wouldn't spend the night feeling alienated from people better versed in the bar scene than her. Or maybe Milo would ditch her too and join Julia's pack of party animals. Why was it getting harder to tolerate people these days?

Because you've done this to me before. Please don't abandon me again.

2.2: Dog Can't Save You Now

Timmory didn't have any plans for the evening, which she'd arranged mostly so she could get a good sleep and an early start. She had a checklist, but she and Julia had gone on so many hikes that by now the list resided in her mind permanently. Last on her list was lunch. In the kitchen, Timmory extracted the loaf and began two of her signature sandwiches, humming quietly to herself. The television chattered in the other room; her mother was reclined on the sofa, but she didn't know where her father was until he popped his head into the kitchen.

"Whatcha doin'?"

Timmory looked at him. "Making lunches for tomorrow."

"What's tomorrow?"

"We're going to the mountain," she said, laying slices of processed ham atop spirals of mustard.

"Can I come?" asked Wallace.

Timmory snarked. "We're gonna be hiking all day. Think you can handle it?"

Wallace raised his hand to his forehead and sighed. "No, you're right. My old man legs would crumple after more than an hour of physical activity."

She laughed.

"You going with Jules and her dog?"

Timmory nodded.

"What about that Milo fellow?"

The name drove ice down her spine. Timmory's eyes narrowed to green slits. "I don't know a Milo."

Her father said nothing—instead he held up her phone, screen glowing with the newest text from Julia: *Hey, you should invite Milo tomorrow!*

"What! Give!" Timmory grabbed the phone. Her father made no effort to keep it and she shoved it in her pocket, frowning. "That's an invasion of my privacy!"

"You left it face up on the sofa," he pointed out.

"Ugh!" she scowled and resumed making sandwiches. The first one ended up sloppy.

"Are you gonna invite him? What's he like? Why didn't you tell us about him?"

Attracted to the nature of the conversation, Timmory's mother drifted into the kitchen and leaned against the wall.

"He's just someone from class, it's nothing. I think he's kind of annoying, but whatever. Don't worry about it. I'm not going to invite him."

"Oh sure, okay. Whatever you say, Tim," grinned Wallace.

She shot him a cold look, turning to her mother for support.

"He better not be one of those 'fuckboys'," Kristina threw up the air quotes, "I hear you and Julia talking about, or he's going to be getting words from me."

It was kind of support. "Thank you," said Timmory. "But he isn't. I don't hang out with fuckboys." If she could help it. Now she hoped Milo didn't prove her wrong.

"Is he cute though?" asked Wallace.

"No," said Timmory.

"Yet you seem to be getting awfully flustered."

Timmory put her knife down in annoyance. This familiar pressure made her want to storm off and snap. "Can you just leave me alone?"

"Yes, don't you have those listings to prepare for that law firm? Seven Hill?" Kristina pushed her husband out of the kitchen. Her real estate broker father snickered as he returned to his laptop in the living room, and Kristina lingered only long enough to give her daughter a wink before disappearing after him. At least *somebody* understood her strife.

Relationships had always been complicated for Timmory. Not because Timmory never had them, or had difficulty with them, or had too many of them. She'd had boyfriends, but they never lasted long—she just didn't have the patience for them. They made her feel suffocated. At one point her parents thought it might be because Timmory was gay and showered her with promises of understanding, that they would love her no matter her sexual orientation, and she assured them that wasn't the case either—even though she really considered it. *(Julia?)* But ultimately, the issue was Timmory's personal privacy and Timmory's freedom that kept her single. As her parents' only child, they craved to see their daughter take those ever important first steps in her life. Getting a significant other, a meaningful relationship, maybe something that could turn into a marriage that they could gab about. Living in a small town like Wolfville meant most of your gossip came from and was about the people closest to you. Unfortunately, it also made Timmory the primary target of her parents' snooping. She made a point of being uninteresting.

Timmory finished preparing her lunch in peace, but after she left the kitchen, her father beckoned her again.

"Hey, watch your back out there, okay? If you do end up inviting that Milo guy," he said, watching her pass through the living room.

She groaned, trying to make it obvious that he aggravated her.

"Yeah, I know. Love you too sweetie," Wallace grinned.

In the morning, Timmory rolled over and grabbed her phone, scrolling through social media before opening up the text from Julia from last night. She purposely failed to reply after making lunch.

sry, didnt see ur text. i dont have his number. :(

She enjoyed a quick shower, dried her hair and tied it up in a ponytail, then deliberated on what to wear. The heat from summer had yet to fade, but September mornings were still cold enough that she wanted to cover up her legs. She picked a pair of thin grey sweatpants she pulled up over jean shorts, then a green sweater wrapped around a low armpit tank perfect for keeping cool once the sun rose as they walked. A couple more shirts and another sweater made its way into her hiking pack in case she needed them. Her camera sat on top. The sun was barely touching the horizon as she prepared; warm, pink light flushed the kitchen window and illuminated the living room in pastel beams. She double checked the various accoutrements clipped to her backpack straps: a flashlight, a pocketknife, a bottle opener; then sifted through its contents to ensure she had everything on her list, then retrieved the lunches from the fridge and tucked them inside. When she was ready to go, she checked the time and made for the back door, but paused when her phone vibrated.

It was a new text from Julia. *That's too bad. Also, I'm really sorry, but I think I have to bail. Brutus is really sick this morning.*

Timmory lingered, staring at her phone. Her lips twitched at the corners, unsure what to make of the text, stifling anger. She knew it wasn't fair to be mad at Julia if her dog was ill. They needed the safety of Brutus to be able to hike the mountain, and if he was sick, Julia probably wasn't going to leave his side. But Timmory was looking forward to this, Timmory *needed* this—those woods were her happy place, the only place where she could shrug off the weight of her pesky responsibilities and expectations and social stresses! She didn't realize how long she'd been standing there staring at her phone until she heard footsteps behind her.

"You're leaving now?" her mother asked, wrapping herself in her robes.

Timmory fumbled for a response. Without Julia, she couldn't go out. Even her own parents thought it best to take the dog. But it wasn't like they had to know. "Uh... yeah. I was just waiting for Jules to text me back," she said, tucking the phone into her pocket.

"Okay, be safe, sweetie," Kristina pulled her daughter in for a hug.

"I will," she smiled and turned away.

Timmory wasn't sure what she felt as she pulled her car out of the driveway and left the house. As she idled at a red light, she shot out a quick text to Julia.

dont worry about it. hope hes okay.

2.3: Dog Can't Save You Now

It felt strange driving to Gaspereau Mountain without picking up Julia and Brutus, but it felt liberating too, knowing that nobody could stop her from doing anything today. She might pay for it later if her parents found out, but until then, Timmory could relish the solitude and freedom she'd been given to explore on her own.

In the parking lot, she noticed a few cars already there; a red minivan and a black sedan sat together, and a rusty white pickup truck sat far off on the other side. She parked in the corner of the parking lot, strapped her backpack onto her shoulders and slung her camera around her neck. A map of the mountain's hiking trails was folded and tucked into her back pocket, but Timmory didn't really need it. She'd walked the mountain so many times it was a second home to her. Sending one last text to Julia to reassure her friend that they were still on good terms, Timmory hesitated and looked toward the trail. It was a clear, warm day, and she had her phone. What could go wrong?

This wilderness was her domain. Timmory could forget who she was out here, if only for a moment.

She plunged into the woods, driven by the chill of dawn. A breeze caressed the yellowing boughs of aspen leaves. Above, the air swelled with joyous and energetic birdsong in the wake of sunrise, and Timmory stopped often to listen. She memorized a few bird calls; even now as they all mingled into one song, she could pick out the species. There were warblers, sparrows and wrens and ravens, and in the distance she heard the knocking of a woodpecker while golden eagles cast silent shadows from above. She would brandish her camera, searching the canopy for movement and pointing her lens at every flutter of wings. The pale-yellow morning cast loving warmth over each subject that accentuated their earthy hues. She reviewed her photos before moving on.

The main trail took her south along the western edge of the mountain. The trail climbed the mountainside on its south end, where the incline wasn't as steep, then it would fall again as it rounded the eastern edge and curled north, back to the parking lot. That trail took a few hours and she'd be finished by two in the afternoon. But there were other, smaller trails of higher difficulty that would take her higher up the mountain to cliffsides that overlooked the town several kilometers away. If she meandered along the vertical trails, she wouldn't be back at her car until around five, which was the ultimate goal. Rounding the western edge, Timmory met a fork in the trails. The main trail continued south, while a narrow path carved to the east, leading her straight up the mountain. Only a few minutes into the path did it become rocky and Timmory had to clamber up ledges, reaching for titanic slabs of granite that pierced the earth. This smaller trail wasn't marked that well, but she still knew the way; every opening in the trees, every flattened swathe of leaf litter was an indication of where to go. She followed in the footsteps of countless explorers ahead of her, confident in navigation.

Timmory paused often to gulp from her water bottle. Walking on an incline exhausted her ankles and knees, so she took a break halfway up the mountain, sitting herself on the edge of a rock overlooking a small stream. There, she took off her backpack and munched on a granola bar as she looked through the trees. The silence settled in after the birdsong died away. The forest was still and for a moment she could believe that she wasn't even there—merely observing, like she was just another piece of the landscape, like she belonged. There was a tranquility here that she never could have achieved with Julia and Brutus.

Suddenly, a rustle. Then a crashing in the undergrowth beyond where she could see. Timmory's eyes snapped to the trees, then above as she watched a cloud of birds take to the air, chattering as they swirled and undulated and sought shelter elsewhere. The sound sent her heart thumping, but as she watched, the forest relaxed and breathed evenly again.

"Weird," she said out loud. Crumpling up the wrapper, she stuffed it in a pocket and threw her backpack on, pulling to her feet.

It took another hour to reach the cliffside. The trees thinned and she saw more of the sky between the leaves. She emerged from the trail onto a broad ledge of dirt and rock that jutted from the ground like a stubborn lip, dotted with bushes that swayed as the wind grew stronger. Timmory drank in the fresh air, standing tall at the edge and looking over the sloping landscape below. Green, yellow, and orange treetops swept from the mountain like multi-coloured carpet crisscrossed by narrow walking trails. Crystalline creeks poured down the slope, most dispersing in a web of thin fingers or stopping at the concrete slabs of parking lots at its base. She saw stark grey roads running along either side of the mountain, between the forest and into the hills, and cradled in the thick masses of wildlife, she saw Wolfville sprawling ahead. Tiny cars crawled the streets like ants in the grass, the roof of her house barely distinguishable among rows of suburbia. Beyond the town, the deep blue ocean hugged a barren shoreline.

Timmory dangled her legs over the edge. She ate most of the lunch she packed away and ruminated over the view, observing the world like she was a God observing mortals, wondering if they ever stopped to think someone might be watching them. She would have camped out there for the rest of the day, enjoying the breeze and the heights and the solitude of her journey, but she still had to venture back down and didn't want to risk getting caught in the darkness.

After a half hour of stillness, Timmory got up and took her photos, then went back down. On the way she passed a group of hikers greeting her with enthusiasm; classmates and their friends from her graduating year. They were heading to a campsite to drink and dick around and extended the invitation, but Timmory declined. Mid-afternoon brought a veneer of opaque white cloud to the sky. Timmory had broken off the path on the southern rise to empty her bladder. As she pulled her shorts back up, there was a shuffling of leaves to her side. She stood and searched. Green and brown colours blended together the deeper into the forest she stared. But she didn't stare long; the forest had yet to prove its dangers to her. Only when she turned back to the main path, the rustling persisted. Out of instinct she sent a second look behind her.

Gleaming yellow eyes caught the sunlight.

Timmory froze, meeting the gaze of a massive wolf in the trees: the very image of her hubris. Her stomach sunk with dread, hoping the animal would just pass her by. Instead it stepped closer, eyes locked on her, jaws parting to sweep tongue across its lips. Its ribs protruded from its sides. She considered taking a picture of it, then realized she wasn't simply viewing an animal in the beauty of its natural habitat. This wolf must have come close for a reason. This wolf looked focused, this wolf walked with intent. This wolf was hungry, and it had just found Timmory alone and undefended. She let the camera dangle from her neck and backed away. The lone creature stalked closer, eyes flashing yellow to chartreuse, illusory and threatening. Dense timber fur streaked with black. Teeth somehow strangely black.

What could go wrong? She laughed at herself. Nothing outside of running into a sick, starving wolf. She laughed, nervous.

She bolted.

The monster erupted after her, its hellish rumbles matching the crashing blood in her ears. Timmory ran in quick, long strides to the main path, but not quickly enough. She only made it a few steps before the wolf descended. Its jaws wrapped around her thigh, wrenching a scream. Timmory twisted around to smack its face away and found the wolf rooted to the ground. Its legs bent, its chest close to the dirt, anchoring itself like a dog playing tug-of-war while sickening black dribbled down its gums. Timmory's eyes bulged at the pain of its sharp teeth. It shook its head, digging deeper.

She cried out and balled her fist, slamming against the wolf's head. The impact loosened the wolf's grip enough that Timmory slipped free, shorts torn and stained red. She only had enough time to stumble and regain her footing, wasting her brief window of freedom. The wolf snarled and pinned her down. Timmory bent awkwardly over her backpack full of supplies. She watched its lips draw back over teeth glistening with oily saliva, and felt its hot, rancid breath on her chest. Timmory whimpered hysterically as she shoved her hands into its thick neck, trying to keep its teeth away

from her face and her camera. It growled and snapped, adjusting its position as it loomed closer.

Thoughts of impending death raced through her mind. She was waiting for the moment the wolf would break through and close its jaws over her throat. She was going to die here, and dear God she wished that there was someone, *anyone* here to help, but she was alone—this, the dilemma of survival versus solitude! Did she bring this upon herself? She had to escape or else the forest would eat her alive. Fear held Timmory at the edge of action.

A grating growl crawled out of the wolf, a voice primordially distorted. Timmory felt it trembling with something she didn't know —excitement, thrill? It was hard to rationalize past every sense amplified by adrenaline. But one thing that became certain was that the wolf wasn't just trying to eat her. There was a purposeful look in its wild eyes that made her think its goals were something else and that it knew exactly what it was doing.

Timmory's thrashing elbow knocked the pocketknife attached to a keychain hanging off the backpack. She'd forgotten about it, but now it seemed like her only option. Timmory reached back with one hand, struggling to unclip it. The wolf's tongue lolled out, centimeters from her cheek, grunting with zeal. She yanked the metal carabiner until she pressed it open and slipped the pocketknife free. It took another second of fumbling before Timmory could open the blade and swing at the wolf. The blade sheared through its greasy shoulder and slid into the open air. The wolf snarled and leaned away, and Timmory tried to roll only for the wolf to grab her backpack and viciously tear it open. All she could do was slide out of its straps and run.

Wise to her trick, the wolf dropped the backpack and pursued.

"Help! Somebody!" Timmory screamed. "Please!" She exhausted her lungs hoping anyone would hear her. Hot tears blurred her vision, a burning ache in her leg where the wolf had bitten her, in her feet, in her hands and fingernails and teeth. She shoved through stiff branches and leafy boughs that closed in around her, searching for the main path, but she couldn't find it. The forest was tightening its grip on her, swallowing her.

Her foot snagged an upturned root, throwing her right back into the dirt. She landed on top of her camera which knocked her breath out, pocketknife dropped several feet behind. The wolf was on her in seconds, teeth in calf, dragging her back. Timmory kicked and grabbed the knife, swiping at it, but the wolf was incomprehensibly smart. It saw the knife and reeled away, then grabbed her arm. Her shredded flesh was nothing compared to the sheer pressure of its grip, and with a twist of its head and a sickening snap, her arm dislodged from the socket. The bone cracked. The wolf whipped its head from side to side, each time severing muscle and tendon until numbness and shock overwhelmed the pain.

She could barely see it through teeth and blood. Her arm was in tatters.

With what little strength she had left, she transferred the knife to her other hand and plunged it into the wolf's neck.

The heat that ruptured from its wound was unimaginable. The wolf back-pedaled and through her clouding sight, she watched it swing its head, unhinging its jaws at the discomfort of the knife. Animalistic, unholy sounds belted out from the beast gargling in agony. It leaned back and scratched at its neck until it kicked the knife free in a syrup of blood.

It turned its ferocious eyes upon her.

There was nothing more Timmory could do. No matter how far she ran, it would catch her. No matter how hard she fought, it would win. It made her so angry. This was her freedom being ripped away again! Her freedom taken by the forest instead! Her heart screamed louder than ever before. Timmory cried and scrambled back.

The wolf lurched closer. Its brown fur was darkened with blood, blood that stained its neck, blood on the ground, blood in its teeth. Blood, red. Blood, black. Its jaw hung open and the inside of its mouth was *rotten* black. Its distorted voice coughed free, tongue curling over noises that sounded like words.

LLLEEET… MEE…

Distant voices rang out from the forest. Someone was shouting.

LLEEETT… MMEEE…

Each step closer intensified the stench and heat from its body. Something dripped out of the wolf's belly.

LEETT… MMEEE… IN

Incandescent green eyes clawed at her head.

LET ME IN

LET ME IN

LET ME IN

Another body smashed into the wolf in a whirlwind of snarls, growls, and barks.

Her mind was fading. Visions of her assailant turned hazy, bodies melting into fuzzy silhouettes, indistinguishable from the wolf and the trees and the ground. Timmory's eyes closed to the feeling of something grabbing her, accepting her death in a foggy hallucination of ripping and pulling and voices that blended into the tumultuous symphony of wicked nature. She accepted the teeth around her neck, that her feet would never run again, and that in the end solitude had become her. Timmory surrendered to the forest and let it consume her.

3.1: Something Something Personal Privacy

"Solo 068, we haven't been able to reach you. I'm calling regarding your monthly activity report from August. Can you tell me why your dispatch log is under quota?"

"It's a slow period and I'm busy tracking. It's the end of summer, herds are on the move. You can't expect them all to be hanging out at home," he said, sitting on the edge of a metal table in the basement of an empty house. Not *empty*, just lifeless right now, except for him. He picked at a deep scuff in the metal.

"Don't lecture us on the habits of the Dire," growled the voice.

"I thought I was exempt since I'm on a special target," he replied.

"It doesn't exempt you from reporting data. Your collection assignments have provided zero DNA samples."

He laid back on the table, legs dangling off. "Well, if you wait for the end of September, you'll find my dispatch log significantly richer."

"What exactly can we expect?"

He stretched his hand above him, fingernails intact. He lifted his sweater and touched the bandages around his waist. "I think they're sick here."

"How?"

"I don't know. They got black shit coming out of them. That's not normal, is it? I've never heard of that happening before."

The voice fell quiet. Tapping on the other end of the line. Something was transmitted unseen between them; he could feel it, however weakly. "Seven Hill will have a representative in Wolfville

next weekend," the voice said finally. "I'll forward you his contacts. Tell him what you saw."

"Is it dangerous?"

"Prioritize your collection assignments to samples from sick individuals."

He sat up. "Is it dangerous?" he repeated.

"That depends on how many there are."

"I don't know how many."

"Then find out."

"If it is, will you send backup?"

"You know that discretion is our utmost concern regarding your target. The sensitive nature of this task requires as little internal interference as possible."

"Yeah, but Daveau is up North..."

"Her experiments may yet have something to do with this. Redact any mention of illness from your monthly reports, we cannot risk any of our activities leaking to other operatives. Especially Castor and Daveau. You'll remain solo on the target until further notice," said the voice. "Can you confirm the contacts?"

He pulled the phone away and looked. There was a new message. "Got them."

"You'll call him Sunday morning to meet. Do not let yourself be seen anywhere near the Diederich family before then."

"Sure."

"You've been stationed there long enough. We expected to have usable data by now."

He wasn't interested in being nagged. "I have usable data. You're

sweeping it under the rug."

"We expect improvements on your report by the end of September."

"Fine."

When the conversation was done, he looked at the message again. He hopped off the table and found a notepad out of the cupboard by the stainless-steel sink matching the table, jotting down the contact details. A phone number and a name: *T. LARUSSON*. Then he deleted the message. Grumpy, the hunter sulked across the basement to the stairs, only to stub his toe on the corner of a dog kennel against the wall. "Fuck!"

He hobbled the rest of the way, muttering.

3.2: Something Something Personal Privacy

Heavy footsteps thumped quick and close, muffled by a wall, punctuating the long din of something being dragged.

A door creaked open.

"Dinner's ready!"

Another thump, this one loud and clear.

"Hell, Donnie, you can't give her that! Her stomach's gonna turn."

"What? What's better than a fresh deer?"

"Anything! Go get a steak or something!"

"There's no time for that. Look, she's moving. She's waking up."

Gold afternoon light flooded the room and a row of bodies distancing themselves from where she lay. Her eyelids fluttered, gaze drifting between them and wondering if they were dreams. Everything felt warm and dizzy. *This must be a dream*.

Slowly the figures focused into human shapes. As she glossed over their faces, she tuned in to the ache across her limbs, in her chest, her stomach, her neck, her head, which then realized into a throbbing, deafening pain. She gasped for air, moving, but her body refused to move the way she expected it to. Her arm stretched and hovered before falling uselessly onto the mattress. Her other arm was pinned beneath her body. Her feet kicked. Something whapped against the wall.

"Relax, you're alright!" one of the voices hushed. A man stepped closer.

She curled her lip at him, startling herself with the fiendish sound

she uttered.

The man paused. She made out a head of blond hair and a scruffy beard on his strong jawline. He looked at her with gentle eyes, reaching out to soothe her, but she felt only anger, confusion, and vicious distrust. Where was she? Why was she here? How exactly did she get here—what happened before this?

The wolf.

Timmory opened her mouth to speak, but only a strangled clamor escaped.

Her heart dropped and she reached for her mouth, her throat, desperately seeking explanation. But her arms couldn't move like that. She grasped at the mattress and craned her neck, spying long, battered legs blanketed in short fur ending in paws. She wiggled her fingers. The toes attached to the paws wiggled in response. Timmory yelped and fumbled to her feet, then lost balance and pinned a fluffy limb she never had before under herself. She searched for her body, but the body she once had was nowhere to be seen. Instead, it was paws and muscular legs and a tail sticking out her rear, a large barrel chest covered in rich brown fur, and a long snout ending in a leathery nose. Like some kind of dog!

Her panicked gaze flitted to the man and his companions, a younger man and an older woman. She tried to ask what happened and garbled out a growl.

"You're alright," he repeated.

She stared at him, jaws agape.

"Is your name Timmory Cross?" the man asked.

She processed the question. Of course it was. She didn't feel like Timmory, but she knew that's who she was. Timmory nodded slowly.

He stepped away and pulled a laundry basket full of objects in front of him, then pushed it toward the bed.

Timmory examined the basket, nose twitching as she drank a plethora of smells that all delivered unique packets of information. Smells of her, her parents, her home. Smells of food. Smells of blood, smells of the wolf. Inside the basket sat her torn backpack, ripped clothes, her camera, and various other supplies that fell out in the fray. Her phone and her wallet sat on top. She rumbled inquisitively at him.

"You were attacked yesterday by a wolf. Thankfully, we intercepted him before he could do any more harm. We got you to safety, but we couldn't stop... this," he explained, then gestured at all of her.

Timmory looked down at herself. What was *this*? Was it the fact that she was a fucking dog and not a human? Did she die and they transplanted her brain into the body of the wolf that attacked her? Did she *somehow change* into a wolf like this was some goddamn fairytale?

"You're a werewolf."

An anguished growl flowed from her teeth. That was absurd! There was no such thing—it was impossible—they were just *myths*! This couldn't be real. It had to be a dream, but as she peered around the room, she found every detail too sharp, every sensation too real. It didn't make sense. A strong smell of blood sat in her nasal canal. She pinpointed the source: a bleeding deer carcass lay at the feet of the younger man.

"You're probably hungry, or you're gonna feel hungry real soon," the man said swiftly, "but you don't have to eat this. We have steaks too."

Her tongue flicked and touched her nose, emphasizing the mouth-watering smell. Saliva pooled in her gums. There was indeed hunger brewing, more powerful than she'd ever known, but the sight of the carcass inspired both desire and sickness. She had this insatiable urge to sink her teeth into the flesh of that dead animal and it was *weirding her the fuck out*. Timmory stared, grappling with the fragment of her humanity that said it was disgusting and her inexplicable oral desire.

The rest of them were silent. Nobody seemed to know how to approach a freshly turned werewolf, and it showed. Nobody except the blond man.

"Timmory?" he asked.

Her ear flicked, agitated. After seconds of indecision, she lurched. She stepped to the edge of the mattress, her body hovering. One leg, her injured one—flesh still gaping and raw—tentatively reached the floor, testing paw on the wooden floorboards. Then came the other paw. The closer she got to the deer, the more tantalizing the aroma became; Timmory pulled off the bed to get closer, but underestimated the weight of her new body and collapsed on her tattered leg. She grunted with frustration, paws scrabbling. Her tongue lolled out of her mouth, gulping in the scent until she reached the carcass. Timmory assessed, sniffed, then ravenously bit in, ripping hide from the abdomen. The action felt right. But the moment the metallic taste of raw flesh hit her tongue, she gagged. The texture was thick, wet, tenuous jelly; but her stomach rumbled and urged for more.

The first few bites were torture, then she tore chunks. She crunched bones as they met her teeth, spitting mouthfuls of fur and slurping down fat, licking viscera from her jaws until she had torn the deer's flank and pierced its precious innards. When she saw the arrangement of dark, glistening organs nestled within, Timmory felt a deeper hunger than ever before. She reeled, analyzing the discomfort in her digestive system, before tossing her head to the side and reproducing the meal. The others winced, covering their mouths at the stench of vomit.

The upheaval wracked and exhausted her, leaving her splayed next to her regurgitation. Timmory whimpered and scooted away from the carcass, looking pitifully at the strangers.

"Water," said the blond man.

His younger companion stepped over Timmory, exiting the room. Through the open doorway she saw what laid beyond: a rustic hallway lined by light pine planks, walls adorned with framed photos of what looked like lakes and trees. Then the door closed,

and Timmory backed away from the carcass, pushing against the side of the bed.

The man exchanged a glance with the older woman. She had a firm look in her eyes, unaffected by Timmory's illness. The blond man sighed and left the room as well, returning alongside the younger man with paper towels in hand. As he wiped the retch from the floor, the younger man placed a bowl of water next to her. She caught his eye and thought he looked familiar—one of the hikers she passed by, a high school acquaintance...? Timmory watched him dubiously, refreshing her throat and stomach with slow, ginger laps of her tongue.

"Get that out of here," the blond man instructed, gesturing to the spilled carcass.

The younger man nodded, dragging it away.

3.3: Something Something Personal Privacy

The woman crouched and examined Timmory as she drank. She kept her distance and Timmory stayed wary, flicking eyes up at the woman every now and then. Once Timmory drank her fill, she stepped back and curled her lip, the hairs along her spine rising.

"You don't have to worry about me," said the woman, smiling.

The blond man bunched up the paper towels and shoved them in a small garbage container he brought in. "Yeah, Mum's the least of your worries. Donnie, though, kid's clumsier than a fawn. I'd watch my tail around him if I were you," he said.

Timmory scrutinized them. She could make out the family resemblance—the low, sturdy cheekbones, the dark yellow hair.

"I'm Nathaniel Winters, but you can call me Nate," he said humbly, and then gestured to the woman. "This is my Mum, Deirdre. She's a nurse, she's here to make sure you transformed safely. We're all werewolves. You, us, Donnie too."

Her eyes narrowed. She could barely even believe that werewolves were a real thing. She wanted to call him a liar. How could it be possible that such myths lived without their existences getting caught and blown out into the world?

"We make up a pack," Nate continued, "there's a bunch of us that live around town. Werewolves in Wolfville, what a coincidence, hey?" he laughed.

Timmory rolled her eyes, worsening the throb in her head.

"Anyway, you should probably stay here until your body recovers from the change. It's very exhausting to make the first transformation, and you've only slept a day. You should be resting

for a couple days at least, especially after being sick."

Stay? *Here?* She didn't like the sound of that. Especially when he said she slept a whole day. A day since when? Since the attack? Since they found her? That was Saturday, that meant she would have been away from home for an entire day. It meant that today was Sunday and tomorrow she had class. Worst of all, she didn't know if her parents or Julia even knew where she was, or if she was safe. How was she going to deal with all that if they were going to keep her here for a few days? What if she said no? As if she could say anything at all...! Timmory rumbled and shook her head side to side, disagreeing, uttering a wail of protest.

Nate rubbed his chin. "You can't do anything else. Your body is still healing. You nearly lost your arm!"

She examined her arm, recalling the snap of her bone in the wolf's teeth. The numbness of it hid well among her other aches. But regardless, there was no way Timmory could stay locked up here. Her body changed from human to wolf. Couldn't it change back?

"We know you have people worried about you. But I promise, we've let them know you're safe," Deirdre said as she reached out a hand to Timmory.

Timmory jerked back, clicking teeth at the woman.

Exchanging a look with Nate, Deirdre simply went to the door. "She's going to be a handful," she said softly, as if Timmory wouldn't be able to hear it. *But Timmory could hear everything*. The growl bubbled. "I'll tell your father she changed with no issue. See if you can't convince her to stay."

She knew exactly what they were trying to do. This was her anger; at the forest, at the wolf, at anyone who contained her! They had no right! Timmory was obliged to no one; not to die, not to stay! Timmory met his stare with challenge to try something. She had teeth and he didn't, and she already escaped death once. Who said she couldn't do it again?

He didn't approach. Nate leaned against the door, looking pensive,

then crossed his legs on the floor. His said nothing as he reached behind his head, pulling his hair out of its messy bun. Meticulously he reworked his hair, gathering up all those loose strands before tucking it back into a fresh, tighter bun. She'd watched with admiration of his handiwork, but it didn't attenuate any part of her fury. "Okay, I get you don't want to stay," he sighed.

Timmory wailed loudly at him.

"This whole thing's gotta be a little scary," Nate leaned back, propping his elbows up on his knees. "I mean, you don't even know us. This terrifying thing just happened to you and we're trying to keep you from going home. I get it, really. This is even new to me. We don't really know how to handle it."

Her noises dwindled to a defiant whine.

"We just don't know if it's safe for you to leave. You have to understand you're in a lot of danger. New werewolves are clumsy and there's a lot of threats out there. People get scared when they see a wolf. They could shoot you or call animal control. Not to mention if you were exposed, you'd be killed. There's people out there that know about us and they hate us. They'd snap you up in an instant."

His worry sounded sincere, so she could give him points for that, but that was it. Timmory already made up her mind. There was no way she was going to stress out her parents or Julia by disappearing on them, nor was she about to miss classes that she paid way too much money for. Besides, she wouldn't be exposed if she could just change back into a human.

Nate looked hopeful for her understanding. Then Timmory's phone buzzed with a text and she glimpsed the message from her mother: *Are you coming home for dinner?*

Timmory locked eyes with Nate and barked.

He groaned. "You really want to leave?"

She thumped her tail on the floorboards.

"Then you'll have to shift back. It's going to take a huge toll on your body and be very painful," he warned her.

Timmory didn't care. It was the wolf's fault this happened. It was *their* fault she was here. Sure she was still alive, but *as long* as she was still alive, she still had homework and social affairs and a whole life that dragged by, but dammit, it was *hers* and she had to carry on with it. So she lifted up on her shaky paws, imploring Nate to undo this.

"You have to just kinda... force your body back to the way it was."

Timmory took his instruction and closed her eyes. Pain burned under her skin, deep in her bones, through every inch of her. She didn't know if it was working. Her head cocked down, and she couldn't feel anything yet—it just encouraged her to push further, sheer determination ignoring the warnings and resistance of her body. But she couldn't live like this; as a wolf, locked up in some cabin in the woods! Then sharp agony in her spine twisted her, and the sudden movement kickstarted the transformation that she summoned. A strangled yelp escaped as her vision blurred. The same agony that consumed her during the attack washed over her again, dizziness and nausea, the snapping of bones. All at once she was expelled from her body. The force of it suffocated her, and within seconds, Timmory fell unconscious.

Her body lost control. She was a cacophony of guttural howls, skin tearing and resealing, muscles ripping, bones twisting. Nate leaped up to help any way he could, but Timmory's determination set her on a course too fast to mitigate. He could only support her as she writhed and changed, swallowed again.

4.1: Domestic Name For A Wild Animal

Timmory barely remembered leaving the pack house. Nate warned her that his pack's assistance would be limited as long as she was away from them. But Timmory, even though she wanted to return to normality so badly, found herself wishing they'd stick around just to punish them with her suffering. She blamed it all on them. The pain, the changing, the complications of this new lifestyle. She felt like they owed it to her. Even after deciding she'd pretend she hadn't turned into a wolf for a day, she was annoyed they could help no further. Timmory was exhausted, drifting in and out of consciousness—but whenever she returned, there was anger.

Nate and Donnie drove her home in her car left in the parking lot. She didn't remember the way, so they gleaned the address from her driver's license. When they helped her to the door, her mother rushed out in a flurry, demanding to know what happened. Timmory heard Nate say something about an accident at a campsite party. Nate and Donnie swiftly escaped and left Timmory to the mercy of her parents, neither of whom could comprehend what happened to Timmory since she was last seen Saturday morning. They followed her up to her room where she collapsed on the bed, Kristina asking why her arm was bandaged and why she looked like she had fallen down a flight of stairs. Wallace threatening that if Milo had anything to do with it, he'd throttle him. She mumbled a story Nate told her to give: she ran into some classmates on the trail, stayed for drinks, got *too* drunk; there were pics on her phone, apparently. Then she faded, remembering nothing until the next morning.

Her blaring alarm startling her awake. Timmory hadn't even changed out of her clothes, which she realized were the change of clothes she brought instead of the clothes she'd left in. Pale mud stains were evidence that someone washed her clothes before they got her into them. The thought that someone saw her outside of her

clothes made her shudder, like her body had been perverted.

More than it already was. It felt like it didn't belong to her anymore.

Timmory exhaled, stiff in the chest. Her bandaged arm was useless, so with one hand she grabbed her phone and flicked through her unseen messages. Most of them were from her mother. There were some from Julia, worried that Timmory was angry in her silence. She buried her face in her pillow, not yet ready for the world.

A quiet knock came on the other side of the bedroom door. Timmory peeled one eye open and grunted. "Tim? Are you awake?" spoke her mother.

Timmory cleared her throat. "Yeah."

"Can I come in?"

She was silent, then decided she would like nothing better than her mother's comfort. If only pride hadn't soiled her ability to communicate it. "Yeah," she answered, bunching the blanket around her face.

Kristina slipped inside, bags under her eyes suggesting she hadn't slept well that night—or the night before. "How are you feeling?"

Timmory rolled over, allowing room for her mother to sit. "Like I fell down a flight of stairs," she grumped.

"Drank yourself stupid this weekend, hm?" Kristina smiled, but it faded quickly.

Timmory nodded.

"We were worried sick about you. You should have told us right away. You look pretty rough," Kristina said, pulling the covers away to examine Timmory's bandaged arm.

"It's fine," Timmory answered, pulling them back. "There was a nurse at the party. It just hurts. That's all."

Kristina brushed her hand over Timmory's unwashed hair. "Do you

want to stay home?"

Timmory nodded again.

"Alright. Your father said he'd drive Julia if she wants," she added, continuing to brush Timmory's hair, tucking it away from her face and under her head.

Timmory sniffed. "Don't worry, I think she has a way there," she lied. The last thing she wanted was her father gossiping with Julia about how Timmory got extremely drunk at a party she never went to with classmates she would never hang out with. Wait. *Donnie...?*

Kristina's smile returned as she planted a soft kiss on her daughter's forehead. "I'll let you sleep then. Just shout if you need something, okay *gordita*?"

She didn't have the energy to say anything else. Timmory watched her mother close the door and wanted so badly to tell her she was a saint. She felt bad ditching Julia, but she knew her friend was versatile, and once she told Julia she'd gotten hurt, she'd probably forgive the lack of a ride. Besides, Julia owed her after she bailed. Wasn't she the reason Timmory got attacked in the first place? It was totally Julia's fault that Timmory was a—shudder, sigh, *groan*—werewolf, or whatever.

Timmory tapped out a text.

hi jules, had a rough weekend. fell down some stairs now my body hurts. staying home today, i hope you can find a way to class. say hi to milo for me

She barely finished the text before closing her eyes and drifting off.

Some time later, the phone buzzed. Half asleep, she saw a text from an unknown number: *Hey Timmory, it's Nate. You doing alright?*

4.2: Domestic Name For A Wild Animal

Timmory stared. *how did u get my number?*

A few minutes later, the phone buzzed again. *Checked while you were out. Need to keep tabs on you now that you're one of us.*

She scoffed. *im not one of u.*

Hate to break it to you, but you are.

That was irritating. *says who?*

Then she typed out another one. *lets just pretend it nevr happened. no one needs to know.*

Can't let you just disappear off my radar like that, Timmory. You're my responsibility.

um. how so.

Can I just call you?

fine.

Within seconds, her ringtone shattered the silence. She was grateful no one else was home and threw it on speaker phone. "Explain," Timmory said groggily.

Nate's voice crackled on the other end. "Hey Timmory."

"Explain," Timmory said again.

She heard him sigh. "Remember when I said cases like yours don't usually happen? We don't have a proper protocol for it. I'm the one

that—hey, am I on speaker?"

"It's fine, no one's around."

"Take me off," he said.

Timmory begrudged the pain in her arm to hold the phone up to her face. "Okay."

"I'm the one that took over when we found you. I brought you back and looked after you, so now they expect me to make sure you don't blow our cover. I'm supposed to integrate you into our pack."

"But what if I don't want to be part of it? I have a choice too," she argued, which was a lot easier to do, she realized, when she wasn't a fucking dog.

"No you don't. This is going to stay with you your whole life. Everything is going to change; what you eat, what you think, how you perceive everything. You can't ignore this. Besides, I'm trying to make it easier for you. I'm trying to help."

"I never asked for this!" Timmory snipped.

Nate got annoyed. "Would you rather have died?"

She simmered, dwelling.

"There was nothing we could do to stop it. Sorry. All we can do is try to make it work. I want to make it work, Timmory, but you need to trust me," he insisted.

"I don't even know you."

"Then let's get to know each other," he suggested.

Timmory wrinkled her nose. "Fine."

"When are you free?"

"Wednesday evening," Timmory said, glancing at the calendar on her wall.

"I'll pick you up," Nate offered. "Text you then. And I feel it shouldn't have to be said, but Timmory, don't tell anyone. Nobody can know what happened."

"Yes Dad," she sniffed.

Nate hung up. Timmory put her phone down and closed her eyes, thinking she'd sleep again—she felt so worn and ragged—but something was off. Her stomach growled, reminding her that she still hadn't eaten. The last time she tried to, she'd thrown it all up. Maybe if she ate, she'd feel better.

She laboriously emerged from bed, steadying against the bedframe and her table. Her legs quivered like jelly and her muscles screamed. Everything hurt. Was it always like this? Was it going to be like this forever? Timmory shuffled into the middle of the room, catching sight of herself in the mirror. She stood hunched, her usually shiny, wavy hair now ratty and tangled up. Her arms were covered in bruises of every size and colour, her bandaged arm swollen. She lifted her shirt and saw the same bruises spotting her stomach and sides; her thigh, where she'd been bitten, was bandaged and tender to the touch. "I look like I died," she mused out loud.

Walking to the kitchen was Hell; Timmory nearly didn't make it. She had to stop halfway down the hallway, clinging to the wall as she willed her feet to move. Her knees throbbed. When she finally made it, Timmory couldn't even open the fridge. She had to sit for five minutes.

From the fridge, she laid out her options. Milk and cereal was always safe, but when she withdrew the milk from the fridge and unscrewed the cap, she stuck her tongue out at the overpowering dairy. Next she tried cheese and crackers, but the stench of the cheese permeated her brain. She tried just crackers, but they were too dry. Even the lunchmeat was unappealing with its briney aroma. Timmory settled for a tried and true remedy for an unsettled stomach: plain old bread. She pulled out the loaf and sat with it at the kitchen table, stuffing slices of rye into her mouth.

A scratching gave her pause. Timmory tilted her head, angling her

ear toward it. A negligible weight to the noise put it just on the other side of the kitchen wall. And she was beginning to smell something—musty, dirty, warm. Timmory went to close the bread bag, only to find she'd eaten the entire half-loaf. Standing, she tiptoed to the wall. The scratching ceased, then when she stopped, it began again. Timmory painfully crouched and followed the length of the wall, eyes glued to where the skittering came from.

It turned a corner and carried along the other wall. She watched. From a slit in the caulking along the floor, she saw a pink, twitching nose. The mouse poked its head out and looked around, then caught its beady gaze on her. Timmory froze, holding her breath as if hoping it wouldn't see her.

The mouse retreated.

Timmory sat on the floor. She listened until the mouse vanished beyond the walls.

She stayed awake for another hour, playing on her phone and checking social media, perusing the photos that Donnie must have sent from his phone to hers, before sleep took her away. Then she woke in the evening, while her parents were home. She reassured them that she was okay and feeling well enough to attend classes tomorrow. Truthfully, the more she was awake, the stranger she felt. There were things she could sense that she'd never sensed before. Hungers, urges that she had never known and couldn't sate.

She slept, unsatisfied and dreamless.

When Tuesday morning came, she was glad to go back out into the world. Her injuries were less stiff now. When she usually would have worn capris and a tee, she covered herself in a light sweater and jeans. Timmory relished the sausage and eggs her father made for breakfast then packed herself a fair-sized lunch. When no one was looking, she tossed a pack of frozen bacon into her bag. Just in case.

Unsurprisingly, Julia swarmed with questions when she pulled up to her house. *Boy Meets Girl* was on the radio again. Her engine growled louder than usual, and she had to roll the window up after

gagging on the stench of exhaust. "I just fell down the stairs," she said, because she couldn't say she partied it up at a campsite.

"Where?" asked Julia.

"My cousin's place. They were having a party. For her boyfriend." she said quickly.

"Oh. Must've been pretty wild."

"Yeah. Kinda was," Timmory laughed weakly. She kicked herself for weaving another lie. It wasn't fair to Julia or her parents, but she couldn't tell them what really happened. *Ugh!* It would have been easier if she'd just died. No lies necessary, just the cold, sad truth of her departure.

On Wednesday, Timmory repeated her explanation to Milo. He laughed it off and moved on and the three of them sat for lunch. Timmory claimed she wasn't hungry after realizing what she usually packed for lunch was revolting. After lunch, she hid in a bathroom stall and shoveled strips of more raw bacon into her mouth, if only to sate her long enough to get home.

She almost forgot about her plans with Nate before her phone buzzed: *I'm here.*

Chewing on an uncooked breakfast sausage, Timmory spied his black Mazda sitting outside. Her father saw it too.

"Who's that?" he asked curiously.

Timmory stuffed the rest of the sausage in her mouth before he could see and grabbed her bag. "A friend from school," she answered, heading for the door.

Her father followed her into the kitchen. "A *boy* friend?" he prodded.

"Ew. I'll be back later." Timmory opened the door and glanced at her father. He looked strangely dejected. "I'll just tell you later, okay? I have to go now. Love you."

He managed a smile.

Timmory flitted out to Nate's car, sliding into the passenger seat.

4.3: Domestic Name For A Wild Animal

Nate looked a lot nicer than when she saw him last. His hair was coiled up in a bun and dark sunglasses sat on his face. Instead of a loose white t-shirt, he dressed in red plaid, sleeves rolled up to his elbows. He wore a strong wild cologne of lumber and earth, which she guessed meant he'd been out in the woods before this. It was easier to see him as attractive when she wasn't so mad at him, but like with Milo, she tamped it down and smothered it before it could spawn anything.

"Where are we going?" she asked.

"Humphrey's Burgers," Nate said, peeking at her from his lowered sunglasses.

"Really?" Timmory scoffed. "No super-secret occult cabin? No forest or anything? Not even the edge of town?"

"No. I want coffee... and a burger."

"But what about all my questions? Won't people get suspicious?"

"People talk about weirder things," said Nate.

"But you yelled at me about being on speaker phone!"

"That's different. I don't know who else is there."

"This is literally the same thing."

"Do you want burgers or not?"

At the restaurant, they found a small table with two chairs right against the window. The waitress took their orders as she poured Nate a coffee. Timmory watched him sip and smack his lips with delight, but the overpowering smell of the bitter coffee made her

stomach pinch.

"You'll get used to it," he said.

"So how long have you been like... this?" she grimaced.

Nate shrugged. "My whole life."

"So you were born that way?"

"Yeah, most are. It runs in our blood."

"Okay, and you said a," Timmory whispered, "pack. Is that like, all of you?"

Nate nodded.

"With like a... you know, like in real life, real wolves. An Alpha or whatever?"

"Actually no," Nate firmly set his coffee down. As he straightened up in his chair, she had a feeling she was in for a lecture. "We're nothing like what they portray in popular media. We don't have that kind of hierarchy, which is fabricated, by the way, by people who took unrelated wolves from the wild and tried to study them as if they'd behave the same in captivity. The whole concept of the Alpha, Beta and Omega is total personification bullshit. Wolf packs don't follow that structure in real life. Neither do we."

Timmory followed the elaborate hand gestures accompanying his explanation.

"Of course, we have a leader. He keeps us all in check and makes sure we're doing what we're supposed to be doing. But everyone contributes equally and the voices of the young are valued as much as the voices of elders. A hierarchy like that keeps us strong and safe." Nate made it clear that he didn't agree with the idea of an Alpha. Falling silent, he looked at the other patrons in the restaurant.

"Okay, and this leader, he's a pretty nice guy? He won't mind the fact that I'm busting into this thing you all have?" she asked.

Nate snorted. "No, he's pretty happy to have fresh blood."

"Fresh blood," Timmory parroted. "Speaking of, what do you do for meals?"

"We hunt. Or we buy steaks. Lots and lots of steaks. There are hunters that sell venison and moose and whatever else they shoot, we buy that too. And fish. There's no shortage of meat if you know where to look."

"Do you eat anything else?" A diet of strictly meat, while appealing now, couldn't be fulfilling in the long run. As if on cue, the waitress appeared with their meals. Timmory tucked into her burger, speaking around it. "Can I still eat chocolate?"

"You can eat whatever you want. Just might make you sick," Nate said, reminding her not to gorge.

"How am I going to get into this stuff? I live with my parents, I go to university. How am I going to get away with hunting and all the wild animal shit you do?"

Nate stared out the window. "We plan carefully. First, we can arrange outings, then hopefully we'll develop some kind of routine."

Timmory licked mustard off her finger, enjoying the spice, thinking. How could she play this off without rousing suspicion? Her parents would notice her leaving more often, and she couldn't always use Julia as an excuse. She'd have to hide her activities with Nate behind more lies. This was going to complicate everything. "Okay, well... I guess I don't have any other choice. I'll give it a shot," Timmory sighed, crumpling a napkin.

Nate replied with a warm smile.

She popped fry after fry into her mouth, thinking of questions. Actually, there were a few burning at her. Timmory stopped eating. "That wolf," she said quietly, glancing around. A woman with dark hair raised her eyes. "The one that attacked me. Is it still out there?"

Nate stiffened. "That's Louis. He's been wreaking havoc around here for weeks. He's feral—he can't turn human anymore. We haven't

been able to catch him, but we're getting close."

For such a feral creature, Louis was a surprisingly domestic name. She flared with righteous anger at him. "What else has he done?"

"Every recent wolf attack on dogs and livestock, even people—hikers, beachgoers—we believe it's Louis. Most of his victims are women or young girls, the sick fuck," Nate spat, the hairs on his arms rising. "And it's because of him we're afraid of being exposed. There's strangers snooping around Wolfville, and if they caught him, it would endanger us all. We've been trying to take him down and we almost had him on Saturday—Donnie was trying to lure him. Then we found you."

Timmory's chest tightened as she imagined it all. His crimes, his violence, his perversion giving context to the memory of the wolf panting above her! Timmory didn't want to think about what he would have done if he hadn't been driven off. She didn't want to relive that moment again, but the images came flashing back. His hulking and starving anatomy. His yellow-green translucent eyes. The inside of his mouth, black as ash. "There was something about him," she said. "He looked... sick."

Nate tilted his head.

"His teeth were all black." Timmory pointed at her teeth. "His mouth was rotting. He spoke."

Nate looked dubious. "We can't speak as wolves."

"I swear he spoke," murmured Timmory. "You didn't see how sick he looked? His eyes...?"

"What did he say?"

Timmory looked at her hands. "I don't... really remember."

"Maybe he was trying to transform. He looked normal from what I could see, but it was kind of a mess," Nate went on.

Was she remembering right? It felt like a nightmare when it was happening. Maybe those flashes of black were part of a nightmare

she used to fill in the gaps. Maybe the words were artifacts of their voices above her, dragging her to safety. Timmory stared hard at the wrinkles in her palms, at her fingernails, shiny and sharp and new.

Let... me...

"I want to take him down," she decided.

Nate raised his hands. "Tim, no. He's dangerous. He'd rip you apart in a heartbeat, it almost happened once."

"Then teach me how to fight, or defend myself at least. That fuck is out there doing terrible things to girls like me, I'm not just going to sit by and let it happen," said Timmory.

"No," Nate's voice hardened, "you already have enough to worry about. Just let us take care of it, at least until you're better adjusted."

She huffed and leaned back. Now she had a name to the face—the snarling, dripping monster with flashing eyes, *Louis*. If only she knew his smell, maybe she could hunt him down...

Nate went on about himself, how he recently finished a three-year degree at Acadia and was hired as a conservation officer with *Parks Canada* in the Annapolis Valley. Specifically, he tracked golden eagles that roosted in the coastal forests, monitoring their nest sites. He admitted that the convenience of his job did make living as a werewolf easier, especially when he did a lot of fieldwork alone. He knew the mountain trails like the back of his hand. He and Timmory had that in common.

Timmory reflected on her own life, how she worked a summer job at the farmer's market before university started. She was taking a full course load, and balancing school and her job was one of her first stresses, but her parents assured she could live with them rent-free as long as she went to school. That was ideal; Timmory got bored of work too easily. She told him about Julia and this new kid Milo, and how she loved to hike and take photos, which Nate already figured out after recovering her phone and camera. He

seemed to know everything about her already, as if he'd watched her from afar her whole life. But he said it came from her smells, her demeanor, and other clues he'd picked up on after rescuing her from the forest.

By the end of their dinner date, it was dark outside. Nate drove her back and they sat in his car outside her house, arranging their next meeting: Friday night, since Julia was so adamant about them attending the grand opening of the Diederich Suites on Saturday. She was surprised to feel better about the whole *werewolf* thing after talking to Nate. Timmory was leery of anything that infringed on her freedom, but Nate's reveries of wandering wild appealed to the nomadic explorer in her. Perhaps this life could be more liberating than she thought.

Later that night, Timmory reclined on her bed with her scuffed up camera. She hadn't checked the photos from the hike yet, so while boiling water for her hot water bottle for her still aching arm, she flicked through photos. Most were close-ups of birds or squirrels or other animals she spotted on her walk. Some were shots of trees, and others of the distant Wolfville from when she was atop the ledge. It bewildered her that she took these photos before her life had changed so drastically. Examining a granite outcrop framed by towering spruce, she noticed something dark in the trunks. Timmory zoomed in on the photo, realizing that the smudge took the shape of an animal. It was too blurry to make anything out, so she scrolled to the next photo. It was there too, a little clearer this time, a little closer.

She didn't believe what she was seeing. What were the chances she managed to capture this? Dark brown and grey fur, the body low in the undergrowth. Flashing eyes that caught the light with a mirror glow. Yellow—no, lens-flare green. In every photo, the wolf was stalking, its teeth gaping and dark. Between curiosity and fear, she fled to an earlier set of photos. The droplets in the grass. Forward again. Black body steaming out of shadows.

She was consumed by the photos when her mother called, "Tim! Your water's boiling!"

Fingers trembling, she set the camera down, viewer still focused on

the monster. Timmory hesitated to take her eyes off of it. After she filled her hot water bottle, Timmory came back to find the camera off. She brought the camera to her computer and printed out the enlarged images on her special photo paper, setting them on her desk for later examination.

At some point in the night, the darkness in the photos shifted just a little.

5.1: Show Me Your Guts

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

5.2: Show Me Your Guts

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

5.3: Show Me Your Guts

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

6.1: Are You Not Loved?

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

6.2: Are You Not Loved?

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

6.3: Are You Not Loved?

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

7.1: Spittle And Bone

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

7.2: Spittle And Bone

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

7.3: Spittle And Bone

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

8.1: A Throne Weeps Not For Its Princess

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

8.2: A Throne Weeps Not For Its Princess

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

8.3: A Throne Weeps Not For Its Princess

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

9.1: Wanderlegs

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

9.2: Wanderlegs

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

9.3: Wanderlegs

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

10.1: The Rattling Of Something Empty

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

10.2: The Rattling Of Something Empty

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

10.3: The Rattling Of Something Empty

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

11.1: We Made A Blood Pact

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

11.2: We Made A Blood Pact

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

11.3: We Made A Blood Pact

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

12.1: Kenny's Friend's House, 2016

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

12.2: Kenny's Friend's House, 2016

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

12.3: Kenny's Friend's House, 2016

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

13.1: Forgive This

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

13.2: Forgive This

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

13.3: Forgive This

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

14.1: Hunter Skins The Hare

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

14.2: Hunter Skins The Hare

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

14.3: Hunter Skins The Hare

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

15.1: The Aftermath Of Smelling Like Dirt

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

15.2: The Aftermath Of Smelling Like Dirt

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

15.3: The Aftermath Of Smelling Like Dirt

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

16.1: "You Wake Up, Open The Door And Escape To The Sea"

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

16.2: "You Wake Up, Open The Door And Escape To The Sea"

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

16.3: "You Wake Up, Open The Door And Escape To The Sea"

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

17.1: Haunting At The Slumber Inn

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

17.2: Haunting At The Slumber Inn

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

17.3: Haunting At The Slumber Inn

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

18.1: Nightmare Mother

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

18.2: Nightmare Mother

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

18.3: Nightmare Mother

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

19.1: Omen Of Sunrise

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

19.2: Omen Of Sunrise

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

19.3: Omen Of Sunrise

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

20.1: Gives Me Direction To The Place I Belong

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

20.2: Gives Me Direction To The Place I Belong

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

20.3: Gives Me Direction To The Place I Belong

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

21.1: Helps Me Escape To The Place I Belong

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

21.2: Helps Me Escape To The Place I Belong

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

21.3: Helps Me Escape To The Place I Belong

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.

22.0: You Will Find It (Epilogue)

[image]

This story is part of the Paid Stories program, a selection of exclusive stories that help support Wattpad writers. Click here to continue reading on the Wattpad app.

Esta historia pertenece al programa de Historias Pagadas, una selección exclusiva de historias con las que apoyas a escritores de Wattpad. Da click aquí para seguir leyendo en la aplicación.